



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

2368 e. 6



HOW THE POLICE MANAGE IN ITALY.

**REPRINT
OF
A LETTER TO THE "DAILY NEWS"
TOGETHER WITH
OPINIONS OF THE PRESS
AND
THE CONCLUSION OF A CORRESPONDENCE
WITH THE
ENGLISH FOREIGN OFFICE
FOR THE FUTURE USE AND ENCOURAGEMENT
OF PERSONS TRAVELLING
UNDER BRITISH PROTECTION.**

« Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis

« Tempus eget.

**ROME:
ITALO-AMERICAN SCHOOL PRESS.
—
1876.**



Letter

ON THE

CASTELLAMMARE INCIDENT.

(From the "*Daily News*," 27 Aug. 1874.)

To the Editor.

SIR,—

I shall feel obliged if you can find space in your columns for an account of the misadventure which befell me nearly two years ago near to Castellammare, and its consequences: a report of which was widely circulated at the time in the London press, under the heading of "Judicial Torture in Italy." The facts as then related were tolerably accurate; but I am desirous, since the efforts of our Government have totally failed to procure me the slightest redress, to give for the first time my own description of my barbarous treatment, and the miserable history of my long and useless efforts to obtain justice from the Italian Government. It may serve to warn travellers of their danger in this country, and the more so that receiving all the aid possible from her Majesty's Minister in Rome, and our excellent Consuls in Naples and Castellammare, besides the favourable verdict of a court of justice, the Government of this country obstinately refuses to pay the indemnity and my expenses demanded by our Foreign Office, under its direction by Lord Granville.

On the morning of the 4th of November, 1872, I left Sorrento by the carriage road on my way to Castellammare. At a short distance from the latter place, a fall of the cliff across the path compelled travellers to pass the point by

water. I placed my luggage in a boat, and made the passage in a few minutes. Ready to land, the boatman saucily demanded two francs, threatening, in case of noncompliance, to pull back. Without using violence, I resisted his demand, and paid the legal rate—half a franc, and supposed the affair ended. However, as I ascended the bank to a carriage, just approaching the top, two Carabinieri pounced upon me, seized me by the coat collar, and commenced a storm of imprecations. I felt unable to cope with these worthies (the more so as twelve months previously I was given up by the doctors owing to violent hæmorrhage from the lungs), but very indignantly, without striking, I threw off the men's hands. This was the signal for an attack; they forced me against a wooden hut, extending my arms against the wall, and at the hurried order of one, the superior, the other drew forth the thumbscrews (which Signor Visconti-Venosta, let me say in passing, proudly claims as "generally in use throughout Italy.") I closed my hands firmly and refused to open them to these appliances, but the operator at once got my right hand in his mouth, and bit me till the blood ran. Seeing no help near, and surrounded by the lowest rabble (highly edified, no doubt, to see an Englishman taught that if he did not submit to their extortion, they could rely on the aid of the Carabinieri), I thought it prudent to surrender, presuming, too confidently, I should at least escape the indignity of the thumbscrews. Vain expectation! I opened my hands, and right mercilessly did these brave fellows screw down their instruments. I was pushed into a carriage, and at my request that the weapons should be loosened, they were made tighter, until, as one of the witnesses since said, I grew "livid and conorted with agony." Enduring this horrible torture as stoically as I could, I was driven slowly off in the direction of Castellammare. I was accompanied by one of the Carabinieri, who placed himself opposite to me, and commenced to jeer at me, seeming specially pleased by repeating that this was the way to treat "voi Inglesi." However, I was unable to resent his insolence, and my hands were in half an hour so injured by the pressure of the screws, that I controlled my anger as I best could.

On arriving at Castellammare, the spectacle of a foreigner in my plight soon collected a large following crowd; I was made to leave the carriage, and by a bye street taken to the station of the "Royal Carabinieri," in spite of my demand to be taken before the magistrate; here I wished to be unmanacled before the chief of the station, but I was taken into a small room, and the cruel instruments were removed, not without my diabolical tormentor first giving them a turn, which forced me by this time faint with pain to a cry of rage.

I was kept from 10 o'clock a.m. in the station till seven o'clock in the evening. First I sent for a doctor to certify to my injuries, and then for our Vice-Consul, who was absent, unluckily for me. Every obstacle was put in my way in so doing, and an attempt made to prevent my seeing either; but the visits I received from English friends began to alarm my captors, and they gradually grew more civil. The clerk of the prefect, about four o'clock, came to sound me as to what steps I meant to take in the affair; till then nothing but messages had passed, and I all the time supposed that I should soon be let go free, receiving to my frequent inquiries a request to be patient. At last finding from me that I intended to proceed, as soon as liberated, to obtain satisfaction for the outrage, after six hours (viz., at 4 o'clock) they took down a *procès verbal* charging me with violence, and assault of the royal force in the execution of their duty; and at 7 o'clock, accompanied by Carabinieri and several English gentlemen, I was taken before the magistrate. To my surprise, this official, after writing my statement, solemnly assured me and my friends that the inquiry was a form, and that he had no power to release a person charged with an offence against the Royal Carabinieri—that the order must come from Naples. The offer of unlimited bail was made in vain, and I was informed that I must be taken to the prison. I was carried off under guard, now a State prisoner. Arrived at the prison I passed the night, I need scarcely say, very unpleasantly, but with no reason to complain of my custodian; the wretched state of the other prisoners, their appearance, their hunger, and their neglected condition, made a strong im-

pression, on my mind; but I will not interrupt my own story. I will only say the keep of each of these prisoners costs the Government one farthing per diem, consisting of a cup of soup made of vegetables and lard, and a lump of coarse bread once a day.

Next morning I was informed an order for my release might be expected at nine o'clock from Naples. Our Vice-Consul afterwards learnt it was never sent for; but it was only the first of a series of misrepresentations, and in course of time, as each step in the case afterwards developed itself, I learnt never to believe a word that was told me, and consequently was led into no mistakes. The clerk of the Naples Consulate came during the morning, and kindly remained with me, whilst the British Vice-Consul at Castellammare, Signor Maresca, by this time fully informed of the real state of the case, went off to Naples and demanded my release, which was at first refused. I have to thank Signor Maresca for eventually succeeding, as being unable to sleep, or eat, and suffering from my swollen hands I commenced to spit blood, and a day or two more in this prison would have ended the transaction as far as I was concerned.

At six or seven p. m. the magistrate himself brought to me the order of release obtained by the Consul, and after signing a paper to appear when called upon, the Vice-Consul giving security, I was allowed to depart. Immediately I wrote to Earl Granville a hurried statement of the affair, and next day saw our esteemed Consul in Naples to whom I gave my report; within three days Sir A. Paget required explanations from the Italian Government, and in ten days Earl Granville informed me if I gave up my lawsuit against the Carabinieri the English Government would take up the question diplomatically. The Italian Government from the first moment commenced by ignoring any necessity for diplomatic interference, and promised justice in the ordinary course. It is not in your columns that I can fully develop the sort of notion here entertained of justice; that of the Italian Government was this, to refuse all inquiry, as our Government wished, and to tire me out by delay. For months, except correspondence, nothing was

done; but one day I heard by accident that the Carabinieri, unknown to our Government, had had a form of trial and been acquitted *in camera*. I not having been called to give evidence, of course there was none against them. By much urging at last I obtained that the Italian Government should prosecute their shameful charge of assault against me, which they evidently wanted to drop, and Earl Granville instructed our Consul to attend the trial. On the 19th of July, 1873, eight months after the charge was made, I was summoned and appeared. The affair was a farce, and broke down. In spite of intimidation freely used, the witnesses could not be made to say that I struck a blow, and consequently it was unnecessary to call any witnesses in my defence, but six or eight Consuls of different countries voluntarily came forward, and declared their indignation at my treatment, and that it was a cause of dread to their travelling countrymen; so it ended by my acquittal in these terms: "This tribunal holding Mr. Mercer has never committed the offence imputed to him, acquits him." I here give you a copy of the despatch I received from our Foreign Office on my acquittal being known there.

Foreign Office, Augt 12, 1873.

"Sir,—I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21 st ult., announcing your acquittal by the Court at Naples, before which you had been summoned, of the charges which had been made against you. His lordship received at the same time a similar announcement from Her Majesty's Minister at Rome, and he has now instructed Sir Augustus Paget to prefer a claim to the Italian Government on your behalf, for the repayment of the expenses to which you have been put in the matter, and for the payment to you of a money indemnity, in compensation for the treatment which you have undergone at the hands of the Italian authorities,
I am, &c.,

"E. HAMMOND.

"To W. Mercer, Esq."

This despatch commenced another wearisome correspondence. I placed my claim in the hands of our Minister, leaving him full authority to accept whatever he thought just; but the Italian Government were determined not to

pay, and I have received from them neither indemnity nor a farthing of my expences, nor a word of regret for all my sufferings and annoyance. As soon as the Earl of Derby came into office, I hoped he might have used some of the vigour so lavishly promised, and expected under a Conservative Administration, in the protection of British interests abroad. If you can find space, please publish this account of how my hopes have failed of realisation. I enclose for that purpose his lordship's despatches (and my replies), informing me that the English Government cannot push my claim on the Italian Government. I have nothing more to add. What you and the English public will think of this matter remains to be seen. I have steadily pursued my part, in attempting to show that Englishmen are not to be treated here like assassins. If the English Government permits it, it is for the people and the press to do their part to prevent it as firmly as I have; and I will conclude by saying that the correspondence in the Foreign Office will more than confirm every statement made in this letter. I enclose my card, and address care of Signor G. Civalleri, 267, Riviera di Chiaia, Naples.

Yours respectfully,

William Mercer.

Naples, August 20, 1874.

Leading Article.

(From the *Daily News*, 27 Aug. 1874.)

THE story of the « Castellammare incident, » which we publish to-day on the authority of the victim, and which at the time of its occurrence startled the world a good deal, is a chapter of ill-luck which is still likely to shake the nerves of Britons travelling abroad. Mr. WILLIAM MERCER, the sufferer, appears to have been brutally treated without any fault that we can discover of his own.

He was, or thought he was, overcharged by a boatman near Castellammare; he would not pay the full demand, he was « collared » by two Carabinieri, he shook them off, and he was thereupon accused of the offence which we can best make clear to English readers by describing it as that of obstructing the police in the execution of their duty. From that moment he became the victim of a series of outrages. He was captured by violence, invested with thumb-screws to act instead of handcuffs, carried off in agony to the station of the Carabinieri, conveyed thence to a prison, and kept there all night. This was in November, 1872. By much urgency Mr. MERCER succeeded in getting the charge against him for an alleged assault on the Carabinieri brought to trial eight months afterwards; he was out on bail, as we should say, all the time and he was acquitted. From that time to this he has had no manner of reparation or even apology on the part of any one concerned. Immediately on his release from prison in November, 1872 — which release was effected with great difficulty by the British Vice-Consul at Castellammare — he wrote a statement of the whole affair to Earl GRANVILLE. Ten days afterwards he received an intimation from the Foreign Office that if he gave up proceedings against the Carabinieri, the English Government would take up the question diplomatically. Nothing, however, came of this. The Italian Government declined to do anything; and when Lord DERBY succeeded to the Foreign Office he informed Mr. MERCER that he had consulted the Law Officers of the Crown, and found he could not urge the claim. The Italian Government, in fact, refuse to admit that the case is one for which they are diplomatically responsible, and they intimate that Mr. MERCER can prosecute the Carabinieri in the ordinary courts of law if he pleases. We do not wonder that Mr. MERCER is not delighted with this recommendation. The law's delay which, according to *Hamlet*, is almost an excuse for suicide, is hardly anywhere so grim a reality as in Italy. The change from the BOURBONS to the house of SAVOY has not yet done much for Southern Italy in this respect. In any case, Mr Mercer's Carabinieri have already it seems, had some

sort of local trial, and have been acquitted, no one appearing to give evidence against them, for the good reason that Mr. MERCER himself was not invited to attend and knew nothing at all about the proceeding.

This is the substance of Mr. MERCER's statement. He was arrested without cause; he was subjected to what may fairly be called torture; he was exposed to public indignity; he was imprisoned — and his final acquittal, even by an Italian court, proves that he did not deserve any of this treatment. He claims reparation, and he does not get it. Who is to blame for this denial of redress? The Italian Government, Lord GRANVILLE, or Lord DUNBY — or all three combined? There, we think, the first difficulty will arise for those who, like ourselves, fully believe that Mr. MERCER has been the victim of inexcusable outrage, but are not quite so clear as to the incidence of the claim for redress. It is not an overweening confidence in the wisdom of our Ministers which impels us to think there must be something defective in a claim that Lord GRANVILLE could not enforce, and Lord DUNBY declines even to adopt. Here at least is no opportunity for saying the things that were said about our diplomatists in regard to our disputes with the United States and with Russia. We cannot be supposed to be afraid of Italy; and a Conservative Government claims not to be afraid of any foreign Power, but rather, indeed, to be on the look-out for an opportunity of displaying heroism and strength. We must not, therefore in this case seek for an explanation of the supineness of two Governments in the supposed craven tendencies of British Ministers. Let us see if Mr. MERCER's own narrative does not suggest some elucidation of what certainly seems, at first, an almost unparalleled instance of unredressed injustice. Suppose an Italian traveller landing somewhere — say in the Mersey — and being overcharged by a boatman. He refuses to pay. A crowd collects. An officious policeman interferes, and « collars » the Italian. The latter shakes him off. We can quite conceive the possibility of the innocent Italian being forthwith charged with having assaulted the police in the execution of their duty, and dragged ignominiously to the station. We do not use

thumbscrews in England: but handcuffs are not unknown and we believe the police have a way sometimes of impelling a prisoner by twisting their hands in his necktie in a manner which brings horrifying sensations of strangulation with it. That night the hapless Italian passes in a cell. Next day he is bailed out, and bidden to await his trial for the assault on the police. Of course that trial would necessarily come on much more quickly in England than Mr. MERCER's case did in South Italy; but we cannot very well compel foreign States to accelerate the pace of their judicial procedure. The Italian of course is acquitted, and he very naturally thinks he has a claim against somebody for redress. Suppose under such circumstances he were to request the Italian Minister to apply to our Government for apology and reparation. What would be the answer? He would be told, of course, that he must take proceedings in the ordinary way against the police, or against whatsoever authority he supposed had done him wrong, and that the Government had nothing at all to say in the matter. We do not suppose it would much affect the question even if he were to plead that the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs had recommended him not to prosecute, but to apply diplomatically. The answer would still be that the British Government had neither authority nor inclination to supersede the jurisdiction of the ordinary English courts of law. Even if it came out that the local authorities at Liverpool had held some sort of investigation, and, without notifying the Italian gentleman, had found the police not guilty of anything wrong, our Government would hardly feel that the responsibility of the affair was transferred to their shoulders. It would be pointed out to the Italian that it was still open to him to make his charge in the regular way, and that until he had done so the authority of the Government could not be reasonably expected to intervene.

This is, we think, the common-sense of the matter. It must be remembered that we in this country have only lately abandoned the position that even for defects of our domestic law — defects denying justice to strangers — the Government was not responsible. The present Lord DERBY

has the credit of having wisely, and we may add boldly, withdrawn from that unreasonable pretension. It is now understood that a Government may be held responsible for defects in the national law which actually involve injustice to the subjects of other Powers. But it has never been asserted or even suggested that the responsibility of the Government begins before the resources of the ordinary tribunals have been tried and found wanting. The Italian Government have not acted very handsomely or generously in this matter. They did not apparently exert any of the influence which they might properly have used to obtain a speedier hearing of the charge against Mr. MERCER. They might with a very good grace, and without the appearance of yielding anything to foreign pressure, have offered to Mr. MERCER some expression of regret, and even some amount of reparation for the unjustifiable treatment to which he had been subjected. Our Government if we are not mistaken did voluntarily present some compensation to the German clergyman who was arrested here two years ago, and kept in prison on a charge that afterwards broke down. But there is a great difference between the course which it would be becoming and handsome for a Government to follow, and that which the diplomatic representative of another Power may properly insist on their following. There has been something like a muddle in the whole affair — we mean so far as regards the mode of urging Mr. MERCER's claim — the manner in which he was treated deserves much harsher language; but we do not see that the Italian Government were the parties most to blame, or were indeed directly responsible. Perhaps the amount of public attention that is directed to the subject will be the best protection for English travellers abroad in conditions of similar difficulty. Our strong advice to each and all of our countrymen wandering in foreign lands (and likewise indeed to those who stay at home), would be to avoid, under circumstances of whatever fantastic provocation, any overt act which the perverted ingenuity of man could construe into a resistance of the police or other constituted authorities. If they would compel a man to go with them

a mile he had better go with them two. His troubles begin from the moment when he makes any vain effort to assert his independent right of action. If by meek resignation from the very beginning he has the wit to put his oppressors wholly in the wrong he may possibly find sympathy, and even redress, in the end. Otherwise he has little chance. Mr. MERCER's very natural and excusable attempt to shake off the hands of the Carabinieri, was made the justification of all the ill-treatment afterwards heaped upon him. He has been much wronged, and his claim has apparently been a good deal bungled; but the grievance has not yet, we think, reached that stage when an international controversy could properly follow.

Leading Article.

DECLINE OF THE BRITISH LION

(Extract from « *Swiss Times* » 31 August, 1874.)

Another, and, in some its features, a worse case, has recently been reported, as regards of its latest phases, from Italy. A Mr. William Mercer was in this instance the sufferer, and Castellammare, two years ago, was the scene of the brutal treatment which, like the "Dresden Outrage," was wholly unprovoked by the victim. Mr. Mercer, disputing the charge of some boatmen as excessive, was for this atrocious offence "collared" by two Carabinieri. Resenting this violence in the mild form of "shaking them off," he was at once pronounced guilty of the still more heinous crime of "obstructing the police;" then commenced a series of outrages upon him of the most brutal and abominable description. Amongst other acts of his tyrants they invested him with a pair of thumb screws, which partly fulfilled the functions of handcuffs, but more particularly acted in their proper capacity as excruciating instruments

of torture. Thus decorated he was carried off in agony to the police station, and subsequently removed to the regular prison, where he was detained all night. Admitted ultimately to bail, it required all his exertions, extending over a period of eight months, and all the urgency of the British Government, to secure his trial for the alleged assault on the Carabinieri. He was at length tried and acquitted, and there was an end of all the satisfaction or reparation he was to get out of the affair. Even an apology was refused; the Italian Government would do nothing beyond making the pleasant and hopeful suggestion that Mr. Mercer might prosecute the Carabinieri in the ordinary courts of law! Lord Derby was, of course, "cautious," maturely considered the case, found that nothing could be done, and "had the honour to be, etc." So Mr. Mercer remains as absolutely without redress as Captain O'Grady and Mr. Penny, the victims of the Dresden outrage. He was not, however, twice heavily fined for the same alleged offence, nor do we learn that the police appropriated his money and portable property; which may be regarded as a set-off to the thumb screw. Outrages of one sort or another on British subjects are so common that they possess small interest now-a-day, and excite little angry feeling, unless in the breasts of the victims. But we must confess to feeling a certain tingling of indignation when we note the way in which a portion of the English Press deals with such cases. The London *Daily News*—which, writing on the Dresden outrage, thought it served Capt. O'Grady right because he was deaf and could not speak German—has given expression to some striking sentiments on the case of Mr. Mercer. Having made the correct observation that occurrences of that description are "likely to shake the nerves of Britons travelling abroad," it proceeds to brace up those nerves again by suggesting to the bold Briton that his best course is to lie down and let under-trappers of all sorts dance upon him until they are perfectly satisfied. Then, if he likes, and has sufficient time and money at his disposal—a few years of the former and a few thousands of the latter will do—he can take the law of his assailants, and perhaps get sympathy, and pos-

sibly even some redress, at length! «Our strong advice,» says our contemporary, «would be to avoid, under circumstances of whatever fantastic provocation, any overt act which the perverted ingenuity of man could construe into a resistance of the police or other constituted authorities. If they would compel a man to go with them a mile he had better go with them two. His troubles begin from the moment when he makes any vain effort to assert his independent right of action. If by meek resignation from the very beginning he has the wit to put his oppressors wholly in the wrong he may possibly find sympathy, and even redress, in the end.» The lamb like mildness of the course suggested is only to be equalled by the ample reparation in which it is to result. After enduring so much with «meek resignation,» and a due regard to the claims of «wit,» the outraged Englishman «may possibly,» find sympathy,» and, if he has been very «meek» indeed, «even redress, in the end!» *Tempora mutantur!* What has become of the original British Lion? The counter-part of the wandering Briton forming his conduct on the advice of the *Daily News* is only to be found in the character «Jack,» in Swift's celebrated but somewhat gross work. Time was when a wholesome organ of English opinion would have given very different advice, and told the said Briton to be a little less like «Jack» and a little more like Fielding's prompt and muscular hero, making sure of having as much satisfaction as possible at the outset, and taking his chance of what came after. It only remains to hope that one of those outrages which seems to be exclusively reserved for Britishers will be attempted on an American citizen, with a pocket in his waist-band, as we shall then be probably furnished with an example of a satisfactory way of dealing with ruffians who are but a degree removed from brigands and assassins.

Extract

(From the « *American Register.* »)

To the Editor,

It is not so very long since an English gentleman—Mr. Wm. Mercer—was thumb-screwed and maltreated shamefully, by *carabinieri*—and up to this moment his only redress has been his discharge on a trumped-up charge of assault upon the officers. Her Majesty's Consul, Mr. Calvert, has done his best in that case, and is now working hard in the present—assisted by our own able representative, Mr. Duncan—to force the authorities to do their duty, and we are all hoping that now that it is a question not of indignity, but of murder, the Home Government may demand satisfaction. Such a thing as this must not be forgotten nor spoken of in whispers, at home, nor must the authorities be allowed to silence inquiry with so insolent a tale. It is a question which interests every stranger in Italy, not Anglo-Saxons alone, for if the vengeance of a *camorra* may go unpunished, none of us are safe, and I entreat every journalist who reads this letter to publish its facts and to echo its protest.

AN AMERICAN.

Outrages in Italy.

(Extract from the « *Continental Herald.* »)

To the Editor.

SIR,

Your Roman correspondent writes in your issue of the 20th inst. that an attempt is being made by an Italian newspaper to throw discredit on the report of the ill-

treatment of two English gentlemen near Ravenna last Easter. Your readers will remember my own case, two and a half years ago, near Castellamare, resembling in many respects, though far more heinous, this new outrage by the Italian Carabinieri, and which remains to this day entirely without redress. Your valuable paper discussed last August in an article my letter and a leader on the subject in the London *Daily News*, narrating how I was thumbscrewed by these myrmidons of the law, imprisoned, falsely charged with an assault on them and long after acquitted; and how our Government made a claim on the Italian Government on my behalf for indemnity that they have since shrunk from enforcing. So long a time has now elapsed since our Government made, and the Italian Government disregarded, this claim, that my experience may be useful to inform these gentlemen that it is wise to spend neither time nor money in seeking aid of this description; or, like me, they will learn how vain and costly the empty result will be. I not only suffered cruel torture and the annoyance of a trial, but on proving my case have been left to pay the heavy legal expenses accruing from the false charge of assault. Well might an American, commenting on the murder of Mr. Hind, at Naples, write to an influential newspaper from that city, «We have first the indignity to Mr. Mercer unredressed, and now follows murder. Let us hope there will be more show of justice from the authorities this time.»

I suppose when our Government at home is *serious* in requiring satisfaction for these outrages we shall see them cease, but until my case receives redress they are sure to go on, and this Her Majesty's Minister in Rome, who has failed to recover the indemnity asked by him for me, or indeed any pretence of regret on the part of the Italian Government, well knows, seeing he is unsupported by the Foreign Office; and I fear the remonstrance just promised in the House of Commons will avail little in this recent case, so long as an actual claim in mine is allowed to remain a dead letter. I need scarcely say the sense of wrong I felt at the illegal and arbitrary conduct of these Carabinieri, was only *increased* by the efforts I afterwards successfully made to prove their brutality, for it is painful

to see justice does not follow law in this country, and I therefore cannot recommend my fellow sufferers and fellow countrymen to couple this additional grievance to what they have already endured.

I am, Sir,

Your obliged servant,

WILLIAM MERCER.

Villa Belvedere, Castellamare,

April 23 1875.

PIEDMONTESE RULE IN NAPLES.

(From the *«Crusader»*, 21 December 1872.)

To the Editor.

SIR,—

Doubtless the Leaguers of St. Sebastian, who are personally acquainted with Piedmontese rule in Naples, are not surprised at the recent outrage inflicted upon an English gentleman by Italian carabinieri, at Castellamare, and which has been made the subject of severe comment by several leading English journals. The whole affair was so coarse and brutal that it may be fairly taken as indicating the conditions and quality of Piedmontese rule in the Neapolitan provinces. Mr. M., an English gentleman in the truest sense of the term, and in delicate health, alights from a boat at a point where a landslip has blocked up the road from Sorrento to Castellamare, rendering necessary a slight *detour* by sea. An exorbitant fare is demanded and resisted, and after a few high words Mr. M. is seized by two carabinieri, pinned against the cliff, and forced to submit to the application of *thumbscrews*, one more brutal carabineer biting his victim's hand severely to force it open. Mr. M. is then incarcerated in the town gaol of Castellamare, and detained there nearly two days and a night, the cowardly Praetor calling upon him in the prison, requesting an exchange of cards, and disclaiming all complicity in the

affair. Fortunately our very excellent and efficient Consul, Mr. Calvert, retains a belief in British inviolability, and has taken prompt action in the matter. Let us watch the issue.

(From the « *Crusader* » 30 July 1873.)

The affair of Mr. Mercer, who you will remember was, about eight months ago, arrested at Castellamare, and tortured with thumb-screws, has come to a termination at last. Although Signor Visconti-Venosta wrote to Lord Granville assuring him that every possible fairness and impartiality should be used in the matter, at the very time of his despatch the carabinieri were *privately* examined and acquitted, without any notice of the matter being given to our consul, or to our ambassador at Rome. As Mr. Mercer insisted upon an investigation, in which he was ably backed up by our consul, Mr. Calvert, after many desultory examinations, he was at length put upon his trial a week ago—formally tried for an imaginary offence, and *acquitted*. But a day or two before did he learn that the carabinieri had already been acquitted two months before of using undue violence in his capture. So it seems that Mr. Mercer has been adjudged to have used no violence either to the boatmen or the carabinieri, and the carabinieri have been held to have been justified in treating him as a violent, disorderly ruffian, torturing him with thumb-screws, and casting him into a filthy prison for thirty-six hours! « *Viva la giustizia Italiana.* »

H. F. D.

Extracts

(From the « *Roma* » of Naples.)

L'anno scorso un Inglese, certo William Mercer, ebbe a scambiare qualche parola alquanto viva con i carabinieri di servizio sulla strada Sorrentina e venne *ammanettato* e tradotto in arresto come un malfattore qualunque.

Questo fatto diede luogo ad corrispondenza diplomatica, ed il processo venne portato ieri innanzi la settima sezione del tribunale correzionale, la quale, ritenendo che il Sig. Mercer non avea commesso alcun reato, lo assolveva interamente.

All'udienza erano presenti vari rappresentanti di estere potenze e non pochi rispettabili cittadini di Castellammare; i quali non poterono manifestare la cattiva impressione che s'ebbero allorchè conobbero il fatto delle *manette* poste al Mercer.

Invero è deplorabile che la pubblica forza, anche arrestando qualcuno per futile motivo, si serva dei così detti *pollici*, i quali potrebbero essere utili per assicurarsi di un malfattore, ma sono inutili allorchè si tratta di chi non è imputato di altro che di qualche leggiera contravvenzione.

(From the « *Naples Observer* » 19 July 1873.)

We have the pleasure to announce that Mr. William Mercer, the English gentleman of whose arrest and imprisonment at Castellammare on the 4 November last, by the Royal Italian Carabineers many may have heard, and who was accused by the Public Prosecutor at Naples of having offered violence to the Agents of the Police force on that occasion has been acquitted of the offence imputed to him in the fullest form of the Italian Law. The trial commenced and was concluded this afternoon at the 7th Penal Section of the Naples Tribunal. The President Judge Perillo, addressed Mr. Mercer in the following words: — *The Court, being of opinion that you never committed the offence of which you were accused, acquits you.* » Commendatore Nicolò Amore defended Mr. Mercer, and made a most eloquent and powerful address in his favour.

(From the « *Globe* »)

THE ITALIAN THUMBSCREW.—Every visitor to the Tower of London will remember the grim smile with which the accompanying warder displays a little instrument known

as a thumbcrew. The guide puts one of his thumbs into the receptacle, and then playfully, according to his lights, explains how the operation was performed. The spectators look on in surprise, and humbly rejoice at not living in times when they might have been subjected to such torture as the innocent looking little instrument before them is capable of inflicting. It seems it is only in Italy where the curious practice is preserved. There the thumbcrew flourishes in all its glory, and for the special benefit of Englishmen. The *Times*' correspondent at Naples gives full particulars of the last occasion when an Englishman was forced to submit to the painful operation. A dispute arose between our countryman and some boatmen at Castellamare which rendered necessary an appeal to the Carabineers. These worthies, pretending that the Englishman resisted or intended resistance, proceeded to bite his right hand and then to place both his hands in the screws. The sufferer in his statement insists that the person to whose thumb the screw is applied, and the person [who operates cannot have the same opinion as to the amount of pain the instrument is capable of inflicting when used viciously. And we can well believe him. But the case is not one for a disquisition on the merits of the instrument. The degrading outrage, inflicted in the presence of people who sneered at *voi Inglesi* and liked to see the *pollice* applied to a Briton, must be promptly atoned for. Lord Granville, we are glad to find, has already urged the case upon the attention of the Italian Government. Signor Visconti Venosta defends the use of the thumbcrew as being general throughout Italy. However that may be, the unfortunate habit of using them on Englishmen must cease, and at once. More than a month has elapsed since this latest experiment was made at Castellamare, and no satisfaction has yet been made by the Government of Victor Emmanuel. Will it be believed that the victim himself has now been permitted to commence an action against the Carabineers for abuse of power?—

(From the « *Standard*. »).

Great Britain is not the lamb she was supposed to be. There has actually been a little Christian correspondence on the thumbscrewing of our countryman by the Carabineers of Castellamare. Who knows — we may yet ascend to the position of a great Power? Lord Enfield, instructed by Lord Granville, conveyed the sentiments of the British Ministry to Rome. At Rome, the representative of the British Ministry nodded. « Sir Augustus » made a protest. Not the slightest respect was paid to him. Our unfortunate fellow-citizen, meanwhile, has been in prison, has bled from the lungs, has been laughed at in the face when he wanted to know the nature of the charge against him, has been beaten, sworn at, absolutely bitten; and where is *Civis Romanus*? *Civis* is helplessly thumbscrewed. « That the screw is uncommonly used throughout Italy, » writes a gentleman whose authority we should regret to doubt, « is perfectly true; this only proves that Mr. Mercer was treated with the same impartial cruelty as the Italians themselves. » Have we not here an opprobrium to a country affecting to lead the van of Southern civilisation — and is there not a little disgrace attaching somewhere else?—

Letter

(From the « *Naples Observer*, » 22 July, 1873.)

SIR,—

There was a rumor a few weeks ago that these noble, tender-hearted creatures the sweet Carabineers, who so affectionately squeezed Mr. Mercer's hands the first time they had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, had been acquitted *on the sly*, from a wish to spare their delicate feelings. I now see by your paper of the 19 inst. that Mr. Mercer has also been acquitted, therefore all that remains for the *Consorteria* to do at present is to bestow silver thumbscrews upon the dear Carabineers with the appropriate motto—« ITALY expects every man not to do his duty. »

AN AMERICAN friend wishes to know if the BRITISH Lion is asleep, or only taking a nap.

Yours faithfully,

Towquan.

Extracts

(From the « *Times* »

Naples, 27 Nov. 1872.

The brutal treatment of our countryman, Mr. Mercer, by the Carabineers of Castellamare, has given rise to a correspondence between Sir Augustus Paget and the Italian Government. On the 16th inst, Lord Enfield communicated the instructions of Lord Granville to our Minister at Rome, to urge the matter on the attention of the Italian Government. Sir Augustus had already anticipated these instructions by a letter to Signor Visconti Venosta on the 8th inst., which elicited a reply on the 19th inst., after explanations had been sought for and received from the Prefect of Naples and the Colonel of the Carabineers. These explanations embody the original *procès verbal* (which occupied five hours in drawing up, thus inflicting a night's imprisonment on Mr. Mercer) with additions. Signor Visconti Venosta, it is to be regretted, actually defends the use of the thumb screw (the *pollice*), as being general throughout Italy. Three weeks have now elapsed since the assault complained of, and no formal accusation has been made against Mr. Mercer. He has, therefore, commenced an action against the Carabineers for abuse of power, and this he does to exculpate himself as well as to punish them. I have by me a copy of Mr. Mercer's statement, a translation of which will be sent to Signor Visconti Venosta. As it is too long for publication, I content myself with extracts bearing most upon the question. Alluding to the report of the local authorities, which had been, forwarded to Rome he says: —

“Without a moment's delay I hasten to say the whole is a fabrication and incorrect in every single detail, and I am ready to swear in any court of justice that this my statement is true in each and all respects. When asked (the Carabineers) why they placed the *pollici* on me, they replied it was because I wished to escape. Now, this could not be true, as I had much valuable luggage with me, and so I perceive no more mention is made of this motive for so acting. I now reply in detail and on honour. I was arrested before 10 a.m. on the 4th of November, and was detained till 6 p.m. before being brought in presence of the Praetor, and every difficulty was thrown in my way to procure assistance and liberation; the delay was probably meant to insure for me the additional ignominy of a prison. As regards the question of payment to the boatmen, it has since been said to be 1 franc. I made no bargain unluckily. However, other friends have paid half a franc, and in my case there was another passenger. The men made an exorbitant charge, as they always do here, of 2 francs. When I refused to pay they pushed away from shore, and then I menaced them to force them to land me. This they quickly did. I struck no blow then or at any later time, being in fact, from my liability to haemorrhage of the lungs, precluded from using any violence of the kind. How can a traveller know the legal fares here when there is no written or printed tariff? For when I applied for one they could present none, thus enabling the boatman to extort money from the stranger. I may ask, when has a Carabineer been known to protect strangers? When asked to do so they only laugh in their faces. It is almost amusing, were it not too serious, to read of their *modi gentili!* and their, alleged explanation to me about the tariff, when I assert most solemnly that they seized and struck me without one word of explanation, unless a volley of imprecations can be called such. I was never invited by them to go to the captain of the port, but I asked to be taken before the Praetor. I used no insulting language, and never struck a blow. The Carabineers deny that they hit me, but their own doctor saw the marks of their teeth, which are visible to this day on my right hand. The idea

of resistance went no further than to call out to be let alone and to shut my hands against the *pollici* (the screws). The uselessness of the struggle was evident. I saw my powerlessness, and quickly surrendered, though passionate and enraged at my vile treatment, particularly when the men in the carriage that brought me to Castellamare not only abused me, but began to sneer at *voi Inglesi*. I will only remark that the person to whose thumb the *pollice* is applied and the person who screws it on cannot have the same opinion as to the amount of pain it is capable of inflicting when used viciously. I am told on excellent authority that prisoners scream with agony from the cruelty of the mechanism. In conclusion, I feel most indignant at having been the victim of such an outrage, but if I can get an open trial I will make so clear my innocence and their guilt that I hope the Italian Government will for their own credit, and at once, disavow the act of their unworthy subordinates.»

I regret that Signor Visconti Venosta should, as I have been informed, have defended the use of the thumb screw, and declared it be common throughout Italy. It is not, indeed, to be confounded with the old instrument of torture of mediæval times, but that it is an instrument of torture I have far better evidence than that of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, even in the «good old times,» never, I hope, had it applied to him. Carabineers who, of course have often screwed it on, tell me that it cannot be used without inflicting pain, and it is only necessary to look at it to be convinced that where the thumbs are thick and the Carabineer enraged, vindictive, or even clumsy, the *pollici* must torture a man. A tight screw is at all times necessary to security. «I do not use it myself,» said one of my informants, showing what his feeling was, «and the *manetti* (handcuffs) are sufficient, but they are not carried so conveniently.» That the screw is commonly used throughout Italy is perfectly true, but this only proves that Mr. Mercer was treated with the same impartial cruelty as Italians.

The Carabineers are a fine body of men, and are, perhaps, the best guards of public order we have, but they are prompt

and sharp and active—at times rough—and would not, I believe, hesitate at a blow. They are composed principally of the Northern element, or were so, and being among a people whom they regard as a somewhat inferior race are disposed to «lord» it over them.

(From the «*Times*,» 18 April, 1873.)

THE POLICE OF NAPLES AND ROME.—This incident, though in its principal features unlike it, reminds me of the case of Mr. Mercer, who was thumb-screwed last November. Had prompt justice been administered in that case, violence might have been checked in other guardians of order; but it still drags its slow length along after an interval of more than six months. There can be no doubt that Mr. Mercer was brutally treated. In order to secure him the Carabineer held one hand between his teeth while he searched for the thumb-screws in his hind-pocket, and the white marks of the teeth remain visible enough. Sir Augustus Paget took the matter up, and it passed into the hands of diplomacy. A special investigation was demanded in the presence of the Consul, but I am not aware that it was granted. The proceedings, however, against Mr. Mercer have been virtually abandoned. He has been twice summoned as a witness before the Camera di Consiglio, and here the case rests for the present; but such is the impunity granted to furious domineering guards that any man be thumb-screwed or cut down in the streets unless a strong protest is made against such brutality. It is unfortunate that the guards, under various names, either interfere in the wrong place and manner or are never to be found when most needed!

(From the «*Naples Observer*»)

We hear that Lord Granville has had a drawing of a pair of thumbscrews sent to him, and that it is not improbable that before long these instruments of torture will be made in miniature in silver, and worn as a «charm»

attached to the watch-guards of those of our countrymen at present in Italy, as a forcible reminder of what they may expect in case they should unwittingly come into collision with the Carabineers.

(From the « *Times*, » Naples, 21 Dec. 1873.)

You have already been informed that our countryman has abandoned his intention of commencing proceedings against the Carabineers who applied the thumb-screws to him. So long as he contemplated such a step any official action on the part of our Government was paralyzed, but now I have reason to believe that the matter will be taken up energetically. There has certainly been no lack of interest felt or shown by our Foreign Office, if all that is said be true, and, indeed, despatches have been received within the last two or three days from Lord Granville and Sir Augustus Paget, which go far to confirm this statement. The evidence of all Mr. Mercer's witnesses has been taken, as also his own affidavit, detailing every particular, and these papers will be sent to Rome to form the basis of diplomatic action. Up to the present time no charge has been preferred against Mr. Mercer, and should any now be made he will claim the protection of our Minister, and have his claim allowed. As you will have perceived, I have limited my remarks to the application of such an abominable instrument as the "*pollici*" to an Englishman, and every true friend of Italy must regret that the Minister of a Constitutional Government anxious to place itself in the van of civilization should have ventured to justify the use of it.

(From the « *New York Herald*. »)

Italy is now free from every diplomatic embarrassment by the withdrawal of the *Orénoque* frigate, and has nothing to do but to mind steadily the question of dollars and avoid the use of the thumbscrews on prisoners who happen to be foreigners, lest one day an American should be imprisoned by mistake, with unpleasant consequences to the Italian government.

Correspondence.

Foreign Office, January 4, 1873.

SIR,

I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, stating the reasons which have induced you to abandon the proceedings which you had instituted against the Italian Carabinieri on account of the treatment you had experienced at their hands, and I am to inform you that Lord Granville has received a despatch from Sir Augustus Paget reporting that in consequence of your having relinquished the prosecution of these people he had taken up the case officially. I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

G. Hammond.

W. Mercer Esq.

Naples.

Foreign Office, June 10, 1875.

SIR,

I am directed by the Earl of Derby to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo with its inclosure, in which you beg that your case may be reconsidered, and that Her majesty's minister at Rome may be instructed to bring at the public expence a civil action against the Italian Government on your behalf; and I am to state to you, in reply, that His Lordship has considered the statements contained in your letter, but is unable to take any further steps in the case. I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

Tenterden.

W. Mercer Esq.

Villa Belvedere,

Castellammare di Stabia

Villa Belvedere, Castellammare di Stabia

12 October, 1875.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to acknowledge your Lordships Despatch of 10th of June declining to institute on my behalf a civil action against the Italian Government for the payment of my expenses, and the indemnity *as claimed by Earl Granville*.

I trust the numerous cases of a like but less outrageous character since perpetrated in Italy will have made manifest the urgent necessity to persist in dealing peremptorily with a subject that until now has obtained no known redress; the circular of Signor Cantelli to the Carabineers gives me no satisfaction, but only proves that the knowledge of his subordinates arbitrary conduct is admitted by this government.

I cannot and do not profess to understand how the Law officers of the crown (who I perceive by your lordships public allusion to the Admiralty Slave circular are liable to error on other matters) can authorize a British subject to be falsely imprisoned, and thumbscrewed abroad without the government of the country being made responsible; but their opinion apart it is monstrous that H.M. Government should allow after the verdict of acquittal in my case of the counter-charge of assault that I should be left to pay law expenses incurred; H. M. Government have a right to require that we all obey the law, but to *take our own action out of our own hands*, and to adopt diplomatically our protection, and then withdraw when our honourable conduct is fully proved even before a foreign tribunal is beyond question a fact not capable of any justification.

If H. M. Government can require redress for outrage on Englishmen in barbarous China, *a fortiori* it should be required from governments professing to be more civilized, and with full control over their people, certainly over their own police.

The Trial for the murder of Mr. Hind has confirmed the bad impression of Neapolitan justice, and during its ten days continuance when I occupied a seat next to the public prosecutor the utmost astonishment was expressed to me

by officials, and others in conversation that nothing had been done by H. M. government to exact justice in my case; I think your lordship has lost sight of the fact that consuls of several countries bore witness for me, and noted the affair of course extensively, and that consequently the failure on H. M.'s government part to force retribution will always be a well-known invitation to other such outrages: the London « Daily News » of 29th June contains a letter of mine that expresses clearly these inevitable consequences.

Since my last letter to your Lordship I have had a correspondence with several members of parliament, and early next session I expect the question will receive due attention.

It has been intimated to me that instructions have been given from the Foreign Office to throw cold water on my complaint at the British Embassy in Rome as inconvenient, this of course may not be true, but it serves to determine me to use every lawful means to make publicly known the helpless position in which travelling Englishmen are placed.

Your Lordship will make allowance for any want of submission shown in this letter to your lordships decision; I feel strongly on the point, and it would be nonsense to pretend that I do not resent the treatment that I have undergone in the abandonment by your lordship of what I consider my right; at the same time I am sure that neither your lordship nor any English Minister can be at all actuated by other considerations than those *you think* are founded on justice, still if my efforts lead as I hope they will to establish my views, I feel confident that your lordship will regret that a mistake on your part has been the cause to me of more mental annoyance than perhaps the original grievance itself. I intend to be in Rome shortly and it has been suggested to me to see the Italian Foreign Minister, but I will not ask as a favour from a foreigner what my own government does not endorse as a right, and it is to your lordship I still look for redress. I am,

Your Lordships obedient servant

William Mercer.

The Right Hon:

THE EARL OF DERBY

Foreign Office, February 3, 1876.

SIR,

I am directed by the Earl of Derby to inform you that Mr. Disraeli has referred to His Lordship your letter of the 6th ultimo, in which you ask whether you are to consider Lord Derby's decision not to urge your claim further upon the Italian Government, as the final determination of Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Disraeli having left it to Lord Derby to reply to your question on this subject, I am to state that His Lordship can only refer you to the answers which have been already returned to your more recent letters, and to say that Her Majesty's Government see no reason to dissent from their decision that they can take no further steps in your case. I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

T. V. Lister.

W. Mercer Esq.

Castellammare di Stabia.

CONCLUSION.

TO MY COUNTRYMEN;

I think I might safely leave with you the foregoing documents as showing sufficiently how the Italian police act, and what an Englishman may expect, however innocently he may fall into their clutches, in the way of reparation, but I have a few words yet to add.

It will appear extraordinary that while my case has had the support of H. M. Consul at Naples, and H. M. Minister in Rome, I should find the Foreign Office shrinking from *their own demands* for the indemnity and expenses claimed by Earl Granville on my behalf. The reply of refusal to pay made by the Italian Minister in its complete form is

very unsatisfactory and would startle the English public not a little; I possess only a copy of part of it or I would publish it, perhaps if a member of our parliament would call for the original document I should receive tardy justice, but I am quite aware that the production of the correspondence might meet opposition.

There are many statements in this reply of Signor Visconti Venosta at such open variance with the facts that I have contradicted them with full proofs; but the point of sole importance in it is that the Law of nations does not recognize the right of our government to interfere, and that the Italian civil tribunals are quite open to me as the party wronged to make my claim in my own name. This answer appears to satisfy the Earl of Derby but how has it left me? In the first instance I was recommended by a government despatch to give up a private action I had commenced and was promised the affair should be treated diplomatically; I defended under Earl Granville's advice at my own expense successfully the shameful charge of assault trumped up by the police as an excuse for their arbitrary conduct, and if now I appear to prosecute the claim directly in a civil court I shall tacitly give up whatever support the Foreign Office has assumed to take upon itself; such being the case most people will suppose our government, if they can abandon the diplomatic form of the claim, would have readily paid the expenses of a civil action for damages giving me thus great moral support, and showing their approbation of my indemnity as claimed by Earl Granville and put forward by H. M. Minister in Rome, but they have preferred an opposite course to the extent of leaving me without the slightest redress, and actually *minus* the law expenses I incurred in my defence against a false charge, therefore not only a great wrong has been done to me by means of the Italian government but our own government has become a consenting party.

If International Law is so imperfect, it leaves not only the sufferer victimized, but the police absolute in this country, for Italian law and custom have no power to punish or even try them, as they are placed above and beyond the reach of the ordinary civil tribunals.

I appeal confidently to all right minded men to support my demand for justice, its neglect has already been felt by the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of other English travellers last year, and as matters stand it is evident there is no safeguard for any future victim to the lawlessness of an irresponsible and violent police system in Italy.

It will be correctly supposed by all familiar with the sort of value placed upon truthfulness in Naples, and the unbounded intimidation used by the Carabineers towards the witnesses, that my prospect of acquittal from the false charge made against me was of the smallest; but I had a further danger to encounter; and I *emphasize* its character because our government has not yet dealt with it; H. M. consul in Naples on the morning of my trial had placed in his hands a letter from the sub-prefect (Righetti) of Castellamare addressed to the judges stating that I was a *«spy of the British government»* this was done to prejudice justice by the official who represented the Italian government, my lawyer did not bring forward the letter as it compromised so disgracefully a high functionary; until now this man removed from his former post has gone on from promotion to promotion, and it is such men that have necessitated the disclosures made in the Italian parliament last year leading to a commission of enquiry in Sicily etc. If my case is noticed in parliament I trust this letter will be called for; as I hold its contents to have been an insult to H. M. government (to say nothing of myself) and a flagrant attempt to pervert the course of justice.

It is moreover generally supposed that Italy enjoys freedom of the press, but when I sent to the journals a translation of the first letters on my ill-treatment by the *«Times»* correspondent, I was made aware that *the Italian government had threatened pains, and penalties to any Neapolitan Newspaper that should in any way refer to the matter,* hence no allusion of any kind was made to it beyond a bare statement of my acquittal included in the extracts given previously; I think this fact alone will condemn the Italian government in the eyes of all lovers of fair dealing, and proves the early knowledge of the misconduct of their

police. However some may think the Italian government are experienced judges of what facts will *not* bear the light of public criticism among their own people.

In his despatches to the English government Signor Visconti Venosta did not display the same coy reserve that was enforced upon the press, and showed some over-confidence in the Carabineers on rather a slight foundation, viz., the report of Signor Righetti sub-prefect of Castellammare the gentleman who to *further justice* informed the judges that I was « *a spy of the English government*; » also I think the Italian Minister owes an apology at least for having been so rash as at once to have affirmed that he placed more faith in the report of his police (*such as they are*) than the word of an English gentleman; our liberties are at his mercy, but our truthfulness is essentially our own.

TO THE ITALIANS. I do not presume to offer more than one remark, viz., that when they and friendly powers brought about the 'resurrection' (as it is called) of their country, they did not expect to restore the *thumbscrew* of medioeval times, and certain other police evils elsewhere extinct, and my case ought to demonstrate to them that in getting rid of tyrannical principles the work is only half completed until tyrannical practices of the past follow.

William Mercer.

Rome, 8 March, 1876.



